

CXIII-CXIV

مُعَوِّذَتَيْنِ

MU'AWWIDHATAYN

الْفَلَقِ AL-FALAQ

النَّاسِ AN-NĀS



CXIII-CXIV

MU'AWWIDHATAYN مَعَوِذَتَيْنِ

AN-NĀS النَّاسُ AL-FALAQ الْفَلَقُ

INTRODUCTION

Name

Although these two Sūrah's of the Qur'ān are separate entities and are written in the *Mushaf* also under separate names, yet they are so deeply related mutually and their contents so closely resemble each other's that they have been designated by a common name *Mu'awwidhatayn* (the two Sūrah's in which refuge with Allah has been sought). Imām Baihaqī in *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat* has written that these Sūrah's were revealed together, that is why the combined name of both is

Mu'awwidhatayn. We are writing the same one Introduction to both, for they discuss and deal with just the same matters and topics. However, they will be explained and commented on separately below:-

Period of Revelation

Hadrat Haṣan Baṣrī, 'Ikrimah, 'Atā' and Jābir bin Zaid say that these Sūrahs are Makki. A tradition from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also supports the same view. However, according to another tradition from him, it is Madani and the same view is held also by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair and Qatādah. One of the traditions which strengthens this second view is the *Hadīth* which Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal have related on the authority of Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir. He says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) one day said to him: "Do you know what kind of verses have been revealed to me tonight? - these matchless verses are *A 'ūdhu bi-Rabb'li-falaq* and *A 'ūdhu bi-Rabbīn-nās*." This *Hadīth* is used as an argument for these Sūrahs to be Madani because Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir had become a Muslim in Madinah after the *hijrah*, as related by Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī on the basis of his own statement. Other traditions which have lent strength to this view are those related by Ibn Sa'd, Muhiyy-us-Sunnahs Baghawī, Imām Nasafī, Imām Baihaqī, Hāfiz Ibn Hajar, Hafiz Badr-uddīn 'Aynī, 'Abd bin Humaid and others to the effect that these Sūrahs were revealed when the Jews had worked magic on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in Madinah and he had fallen ill under its effect. Ibn Sa'd has related on the authority of Wāqidī that this happened in A.H. 7. On this very basis Sufyān bin 'Uyainah also has described these Sūrahs as Madani.

But, as we have explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Al-Ikhlās, when it is said about a certain Sūrah or verse that it was revealed on this or that particular occasion, it does not necessarily mean that it was revealed for the first time on that very occasion. Rather it sometimes so happened that a Sūrah or a verse had previously been revealed, then on the occurrence or appearance of a particular incident or situation, the Holy Prophet's attention was drawn to it by Allah for the second time, or even again and again. In our opinion the same also was the case with the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. The subject-matter of these Sūrahs is explicit that these were sent down at Makkah in the first instance when opposition to the Holy Prophet there had grown very intense. Later, when at Madinah

storms of opposition were raised by the hypocrites, Jews and polytheists, the Holy Prophet was instructed to recite these very Sūrahs, as has been mentioned in the above cited tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir. After this, when magic was worked on him, and his illness grew intense, Gabriel came and instructed him by Allah's command to recite these very Sūrahs. Therefore, in our opinion, the view held by the commentators who describe both these Sūrahs as Makki is more reliable. Regarding them as connected exclusively with the incident of magic is difficult, for to this incident relates only one verse (v.4), the remaining verses of Sūrah al-Falaq and the whole of Sūrah An-Nās have nothing to do with it directly.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The conditions under which these two Sūrahs were sent down in Makkah were as follows: As soon as the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to preach the message of Islam, it seemed as though he had provoked all classes of the people around him. As his message spread the opposition of the disbelieving Quraish also became more and more intense. As long as they had any hope that they would be able to prevent him from preaching his message by throwing some temptation in his way, or striking some bargain with him, their hostility did not become very active. But when the Holy Prophet disappointed them completely that he would not effect any kind of compromise with them in the Matter of faith, and in Sūrah . Al-Kāfirūn they were plainly told: "I do not worship those whom you worship nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship. For you is your religion and for me is mine", the hostility touched its extreme limits. More particularly, the families whose members (men or women, boys or girls) had accepted Islam, were burning with rage from within against the Holy Prophet, They were cursing him holding secret consultations to kill him quietly in the dark of the night so that the Banī Hāshim could not discover the murderer and take revenge; magic and charms were being worked on him so as to cause his death, or make him fall ill, or become mad; satans from among the men and the Jin spread on every side so as to whisper one or another evil into the hearts of the people against him and the Qur'ān brought by him so that they became suspicious of him and fled him. There were many people who were burning with jealousy against him, for they could not tolerate that a man from another family or clan

than their own should flourish and become prominent. For instance, the reason why Abū Jahl was crossing every limit in his hostility to him has been explained by himself: "We and the Banī 'Abdī Manaf (to which the Holy Prophet belonged) were rivals of each other: they fed others, we too fed others; they provided conveyances to the people, we too did the same; they gave donations we too gave donations, so much so that when they and we have become equal in honour and nobility, they now proclaim that they have a Prophet who is inspired from the heaven; how can we compete with them in this field? By God, we will never acknowledge him, nor affirm faith in him". (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 33-338).

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was commanded to tell the people: "I seek refuge with the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of everything that he has created, and from the evil of the darkness of night and from the evil of the magicians, men and women, and from the evil of the envious", and to tell 'them: "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, and the Delty of mankind, from the evil of the whispers, who returns over and over again, who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or men." This is similar to what the Prophet Moses had been told to say when Pharaoh had expressed his design before his full court to kill him: "I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning." (Al-Mu'min: 27). And: "I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord lest you should assail me:" (Ad-Dukhān: 20).

On both occasions these illustrious Prophets of Allah were confronted with well-equipped, resourceful and powerful enemies. On both occasions they stood firm on their message of Truth against their strong opponents, whereas they had no material power on the strength of which they could fight them, and on both occasions they utterly disregarded the threats and dangerous plans and hostile devices of the enemy, saying: "We have taken refuge with the Lord of the universe against you." Obviously, such firmness and steadfastness can be shown only by the person who has the conviction that the power of His Lord is the supreme power; that all powers of the world are insignificant against Him, and that no one can harm the one who has taken His refuge. Only such a one can say: "I will not give up preaching the Word of Truth, I

care the least for what you may say or do, for I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord and Lord of all universe."

Question whether Mu'awwidhatayn are, or are not, Qur'ānic

The above discussion is enough to help one understand fully the theme and content of the two Sūrahs, but since three points in the Books of *Hadith* and commentary concerning these Sūrah have been discussed, which are likely to create doubts in the minds, it is necessary to clear them also here.

First, whether it is absolutely established that these two Sūrahs are the Qur'ānic Sūrahs, or whether there is some doubt in this regard. This question arose because in the traditions related from an illustrious Companion like Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, it has been said that he did not regard these two Sūrahs as the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān and had eliminated these from his copy of the *Mushaf*. Imām Ahmad, Bazzar, Taharānī, Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Ya'lā, 'Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal, Humaydī, Abū Nu'aim, Ibn Hibbān and other traditionists have related this from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd with different chains of transmitters and mostly on sound authority. According to these traditions, he not only eliminated these Sūrahs from the *Mushaf* but it has also been reported that he used to say: "Do not mix up with the Qur'ān that which is not of the Qur'ān. These two Sūrahs are not included in the Qur'ān. This was only a command enjoined on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for seeking God's refuge." In some traditions there is also the addition that he did not recite these Sūrahs in the Prayer.

On the basis of these traditions the opponents of Islam had an opportunity to raise doubts about the Qur'ān, saying that this Book, God forbid, is not free from corruption. For when, according to a Companion of the rank of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, these two Sūrahs are an annexation to the Qur'ān, many other additions and subtractions also might have been made in it. To rid the Qur'ān of this blame Qāḍī Abū Bakr Al-Bāqillānī, Qāḍī 'Iyāq and others took the stand that Ibn Mas'ūd was not in fact a denier of the *Mu'awwidhatayn* being Qur'ānic but only refused to write them in the *Mushaf*. For, according to him, only that which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had allowed, should be written in the *Mushaf*, and Ibn Mas'ūd did not

receive the information that the Holy Prophet had allowed this. But this stand is not correct, for according to sound evidence, it is confirmed that Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) had denied that these were Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. Some other scholars, for instance, Imām Nawawī, Imām Ibn Hazm and Imām Fakhr-uddīn Rāzi, regard this as a pure lie and falsehood that Ibn Mas'ūd had asserted any such thing. But to reject genuine historical facts without sound evidence is un-scientific.

Now, the question is: How can the blame that attaches to the Qur'ān because of these traditions of Ibn Mas'ūd in his *Musnad*, has several answers which we shall give below in sequence:

- (1) Hāfiz Bazzār after relating these traditions of Ibn Mas'ūd in his *Musnad*, has written that he is solitary and isolated in his opinion: no one from among the Companions has supported this view.
- (2) The copies of the Qur'ān which the third Caliph, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him), had got compiled by the consensus of the Companions and which he had sent from the Islamic Caliphate officially to the centres of the world of Islam contained both these Sūrahs.
- (3) The *Musnad* which, since the sacred time of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) till today, has the seal of consensus of the entire world of Islam, contains both these Sūrahs. The solitary opinion of only Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, in spite of his high rank, has no weight against this great consensus.
- (4) It is confirmed by sound and reliable *aḥādīth* from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) that he not only recited these Sūrahs in the Prayer himself but instructed others also to recite them, and taught them to the people as the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. Consider, for instance; the following *aḥādīth*:

We have cited on the authority of Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī the tradition of Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir that the Holy Prophet told him about Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās, saying that those verses had been revealed to him that night. A tradition in Nasā'ī from 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir is to the effect that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited both these Sūrah in the morning Prayer. Ibn Hibbān from this same Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah has related the traditions that the Holy Prophet

said to him: "As far as possible, do not give up recitation of these two Sūrah in the Prayer." Sa'īd bin Mansūr has related, on the authority of Mu'ādh bin Jabal, that the Holy Prophet recited both these Sūrahs in the morning Prayer. Imām Ahmad on sound authority has related in his *Musnad* the tradition from a Companion that the Holy Prophet said to him, "When you perform the Prayer, recite both these Sūrahs in it." In *Musnad Ahmad*, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī this tradition of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir has been related: "The Holy Prophet said to him: Should I not teach you two such Sūrah as are among the best Sūrahs that the people recite? He said: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Holy Prophet taught him the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. Then the Prayers began and the Holy Prophet recited the same two Sūrahs in it also, and when after the Prayer the Holy Prophet passed by him, he said to him, 'O 'Uqbah, how did you like it?' Then he instructed him to the effect: When you go to bed, and when you get up from bed, recite these Sūrahs." In *Musnad Ahmad*, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī there is a tradition from 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir, saying that the Holy Prophet exhorted him to recite the *Mu'awwidhāt* (i.e. *Qul Huwa Allahu ahad* and the *Mu'awwidhatayn*) after every prayer. Nasā'ī Ibn Mardūyah and Hākim have related this tradition also from 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir: "Once the Holy Prophet was riding on a conveyance and I was walking along with him with my hand placed on his sacred foot, I said: Kindly teach me Sūrah Hūd or Sūrah Yūsuf. He replied: In the sight of Allah there is nothing more beneficial for the servant than *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq*." A tradition from 'Abdullah bin 'Abīs al-Juhani has been related by Nasā'ī, Baihaqī and Ibn Sa'd, saying that the Holy Prophet said to him: "Ibn 'Abīs, should I not tell you what are the best things out of the means by which the seekers of refuge have sought refuge with Allah? I submitted: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. He replied: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-nās*' both these Sūrahs." Ibn Mardūyah has related from Hadrat Umm Salamah: "The Sūrahs best liked by Allah are: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-nās*."

Here, the question arises: what caused Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the misunderstanding that these two are not Sūrahs of the Qur'ān? We get the answer to it when we combine two traditions: first, that Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd asserted that this was only a command which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was given to teach him the method of seeking refuge with Allah; second, the tradition which

Imām Bukhārī has related in his *Sahīh*, Imām Ahmad in his *Musnad*, Hāfiz Abū Bakr al-Humaidī in his *Musnad*, Abū Nu'aim in his *Al-Mustakhraj* and Nasā'ī in his *Sunan*, with different chains of transmitters, on the authority of Zirr bin Hubaish, with a slight variation in wording from Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, who held a distinguished place among the Companions on the basis of his knowledge of the Qur'ān. Zirr bin Hubaish states: "I said to Hadrat Ubayy: Your brother, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, says these things. What do you say about this view? He replied: I had questioned the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about this. He said to me: I was told to say *qul*, so I said *qul*. Therefore, we too say the same as the Holy Prophet said." In the tradition related by Imām Ahmad, Hadrat Ubayy's words are to the effect: "I bear witness that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) told me that Gabriel (peace be on him) had told him to say: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq*; therefore, he recited likewise, and Gabriel asked him to say, *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbhin nās*; therefore he too said likewise. Hence, we too say as the Holy Prophet said." A little consideration of these two traditions will show that the word *qul* (say) in the two Sūrah's caused Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had been commanded to say: *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbhin-nās*. But he did not feel any need to question the Holy Prophet about it. In the mind of Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b also a question arose about this and he put it before the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet replied: "Since Gabriel (peace be on him) had said *qul*, so I too say *qul*." Let us put it like this. If somebody is commanded and asked: "Say, I seek refuge", he will not carry out the command, saying: "Say, I seek refuge", but he will drop the word "say" and say: "I seek refuge." On the contrary, if the messenger of a superior officer conveys to somebody the message in these words: "Say, I seek refuge", and this command is given to him not only for his own person but to be conveyed to others, he will convey the words of the message verbatim to the people, and will not have the permission to drop anything from the text of the message. Thus, the fact that these two Sūrah's begin with the word *qul* is a clear proof that it is Divine Word, which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was bound to convey verbatim. It was not merely a command given to him for his person. Besides these two Sūrah's, there are 330 other verses in the Qur'ān which begin with the word *qul* (say). The presence of *qul* in all these is a proof that it is

Divine Word, which was obligatory for the Holy Prophet to convey verbatim; otherwise if *qul* everywhere had meant a command, the Holy Prophet would have dropped it and said only that which he was commanded to say, and it would not have been recorded in the Qur'an, but, on the contrary, he would have remained content with saying only what he was commanded to say.

Here, if one considers this, one can understand fully well how unreasonable it is to regard the Companions as infallible and to make the clamour that a Companion has been defamed as soon as one hears a saying or doing of his being described as wrong. Here, one can clearly see what a blunder happened to be committed by an illustrious Companion like Haqrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud about two Sūrahs of the Qur'an. If such an error could be committed by an eminent Companion like him, others also might commit an error. We can examine it in the scientific way, and describe it as wrong if a thing said or done by a Companion is proved to be wrong. But wicked indeed would be the person who went beyond describing a wrong act as wrong and started reproving and finding fault with the Companions or the Holy Prophet of Allah. Concerning the *Mu'awwidhatayn* the commentators and traditionists have described the opinion of Ibn Mas'ud as wrong, but no one has dared to say that by denying these two Sūrahs of the Qur'an, he had, God forbid, become a disbeliever.

Question of Holy Prophet's being affected by Magic

The second thing that has arisen in respect of these two Sūrahs is that, according to traditions, magic had been worked on the Holy Prophet, and he had fallen ill under its effect, and Gabriel (peace be on him) had instructed him to repeat these Sūrahs to remove the charm. This has been objected to by many rationalists of both ancient and modern times. They say that if these traditions are accepted, the whole *Shari'ah* becomes doubtful. For if the Prophet could be charmed, and according to these traditions he was charmed, one cannot say what the Prophet might have been made to say and do under the influence of magic by his opponents, and what in his teaching may be Divine and what the result of magic. Not only this: they also allege that if this is accepted as true, it might well be that the Prophet might have been prompted to make the claim to Prophethood through magic and the Prophet by misunderstanding might have thought that an angel had come to him.

They also argue that these traditions clash with the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān mentions the accusation of the disbelievers who said that the Prophet was bewitched (Barrī Isra'īl 47), but these traditions confirm the accusation of the disbelievers that the Prophet had actually been charmed and bewitched.

For a proper investigation of this question it is necessary that one should first see whether it is established by authentic historical evidence that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had actually been affected by magic, and if so, what it was and to what extent. Then it should be seen whether the objections raised against what is established historically do actually apply to it or not.

The Muslim scholars of the earliest period were truly honest and upright in that they did not try to corrupt history or conceal facts according to their own ideas, concepts and assumptions. They conveyed intact to the later generations whatever was confirmed historically and did not at all care how the material supplied by them could be used by the one who was bent upon drawing perverse conclusions from the facts. Now if something stands confirmed by authentic and historical means it is neither right for an honest and rightminded person that he should deny history on the ground that in case he accepted it, it would lead to these evil results according to his thinking, nor is it right that he should add to and stretch beyond its genuine limits by conjecture and speculation whatever is established historically. Instead, he should accept history as history and then see what is actually proved by it and what is not.

As far as the historical aspect is concerned, the incident of the Holy Prophet's being affected by magic is absolutely confirmed, and if it can be refuted by scientific criticism, then no historical event of the world can be proved right and genuine. It has been related by Bukharī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Ahmad, 'Abdur Razzāq, Humaid, Bathaqī, Tabarānī, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Hākim, 'Abd bin Humaid and other traditionalists on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Arqam and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, through so many different and numerous channels that forgery is out of question. Although each tradition by itself is an isolated report (*khabar waḥid*), we give it below as a connected event from the details provided by the traditions.

After the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) returned to Madinah, a deputation of the Jews of Khaibar visited Madinah in Muharram, A.H. 7 and met a famous magician, Labid bin A'sam, who belonged to the Anṣar tribe of Banī Zurayq. They said to him, "You know how Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has treated us. We have tried our best to bewitch him but have not succeeded. Now we have come to you because you are a more skilled magician. Here are three gold coins, accept these and cast a powerful magic spell on Muḥammad." In those days the Holy Prophet had a Jewish boy as his attendant. Through him they obtained a piece of the Holy Prophet's comb with some hair stuck to it. Magic was worked on the same hair and teeth of the comb. According to some traditions, magic was worked by Labid bin A'sam himself, according to others, his sisters were more skilled than him and he got the spell cast through them. Whatever be the case, Labid placed this spell in the spathe² of a male date-tree and hid it under a stone at the bottom of Dharwān or Dhī Arwān, the well of Banī Zurayq. The spell took one whole year to have effect upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In the latter half of the year the Holy Prophet started feeling as if he was unwell. The last forty days became hard on him, of which the last three days were even harder. But its maximum effect on him was that he was melting away from within. He thought he had done a thing whereas, in fact, he had not done it, he thought he had visited his wives whereas he had not visited them; and sometimes he would doubt having seen something whereas, in fact, he had not seen it. All these effects were confined to his own person, so much so that the other people could not notice what state he was passing through. As for his being a Prophet, no change occurred in the performance of his duties. There is no tradition

1 Some reporters regard him as a Jew and some as a hypocrite and ally of the Jews, but they all agree that he belonged to Banī Zurayq, and everybody knows that Banī Zurayq was not a Jewish tribe but a tribe of the Anṣar of Khazraj. Therefore, either he was from among those who had become Jews from the people of Madinah, or on account of his being an ally of the Jews some people considered him also a Jew. However, use of the word hypocrite for him shows that he had become a Muslim only outwardly.

2 The cluster of the palm fruit in the beginning is covered in the spathe and the colour of the male tree's spathe resembles man's colour and its smell his seminal fluid.

to say that he might have forgotten some verses of the Qur'ān in those days, or might have recited a verse wrongly, or a change might have occurred in the assemblies and in his counsels and sermons, or he might have presented a discourse as Revelation which may not have been revealed to him, or he might have missed a Prayer and thought that he had performed it God forbid, if any such thing had happened, it would have caused a clamour and the whole of Arabia would have known that a magician had overpowered the one whom no power had been able to overpower. But the Holy Prophet's position as a Prophet remained wholly unaffected by it. Only in his personal life he remained worried on account of it. At last, one day when he was in the house of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, he prayed to Allah to be restored to full health. In the meantime he fell asleep or drowsed and on waking he said to Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, "My Lord has told me what I had asked of Him." Hadrat 'Ā'ishah asked what it was. He replied, "Two men (i.e. two angels in human guise) came to me. One sat near my head and the other near my feet. The first asked: what has happened to him? The other replied: Magic has been worked on him. The first asked: who has worked it? He replied, Labīd bin A'sam. He asked: In what is it contained? He replied: In the comb and hair covered in the spathe of a male date-tree. He asked: where is it? He replied: under a stone at the bottom of Dhī Arwān (or Dharwān), the well of Banī Zurayq. He asked: what should be done about it? He replied: the well should be emptied and it should be taken out from under the stone. The Holy Prophet then sent Hadrat 'Alī, Hadrat 'Amr bin Yāsir and Hadrat Zubair. They were also joined by Jubair bin Iyās az-Zurqī and Qais bin Mihsan az-Zurqī (two men from Banī Zurayq). Later the Holy Prophet also arrived at the well along with some Companions. The water was taken out and the spathe recovered. There they found that beside the comb and hair there was a cord with eleven knots on it and a wax image with needles pricked into it. Gabriel (peace be on him) came and told him to repeat the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. As he repeated verse after verse, a knot was loosened and a needle taken out every time, till on finishing the last words all the knots were loosened and all the needles removed, and he was entirely freed from the charm. After this he called Labīb and questioned him. He confessed his guilt and the Holy Prophet let him go, for he never avenged himself anyone for any harm done to his person. He even declined to talk about it to others, saying that Allah had restored him to

health, therefore he did not like that he should incite the people against anyone

This is the story of the magic worked on the Holy Prophet. There is nothing in it which might run counter to his office of Prophethood. In his personal capacity if an injury could be inflicted on him as it happened, in the battle of Uhud, if he could fall from the horse and be hurt as is confirmed by the *Ḥadīth*, if he could be stung by a scorpion as has been mentioned in some Traditions and none of these negates the protection promised to him by Allah in his capacity as Prophet, he could also fall ill under the influence of magic in his personal capacity. That a prophet can be affected by magic is also confirmed by the Qur'ān. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf it has been said about the magicians of Pharaoh that when they confronted the Prophet Moses, they bewitched the eyes of thousands of people who had assembled to witness the encounter (v. 116). In Sūrah Tā Hā it has been said that not only the common people but the Prophet Moses too felt that the cords and staffs that they cast were running towards them like so many snakes, and this filled Moses' heart with fear. Thereupon Allah revealed to him: "Don't fear for you will come out victorious. Cast down your staff," (vv. 66-69). As for the objection that this then confirms the accusation of the disbelievers of Makkah that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was a bewitched man, its answer is that the disbelievers did not call him a bewitched man in the sense that he had fallen ill under the effect of magic cast by somebody, but in the sense that some magician had, God forbid, made him mad, and he had made claim to Prophethood and was telling the people tales of Hell and Heaven in his same madness. Now, obviously this objection does not at all apply to a matter about which history confirms that the magic spell had affected only the person of Muhammad (upon whom be peace) and not the Prophethood of Muhammad (upon whom be peace), which remained wholly unaffected by it.

In this connection, another thing worthy of mention is that the people who regard magic as a kind of superstition hold this view only because the effect of magic cannot be explained scientifically. But there are many things in the world which one experiences and observes but one cannot explain scientifically how they happen. If we cannot give any such explanation it does not become necessary that we should deny the

thing itself which we cannot explain. Magic, in fact, is a psychological phenomenon which can affect the body through the mind just as physical things affect the mind through the body. Fear, for instance, is a psychological phenomenon, but it affects the body: the hair stand on end and the body shudders. Magic does not; in fact, change the reality, but under its influence man's mind and senses start feeling as if reality had changed. The, staffs and the cords that the magicians had thrown towards the Prophet Moses, had not actually become snakes, but the eyes of the multitude of people were so bewitched that everybody felt they were snakes, even the senses of the Prophet Moses could not remain unaffected by the magic spell. Likewise, in Al-Baqarah: 102, it has been said that in Babylon people learnt such magic from Hārūt and Mārūt as could cause division between husband and wife. This too was a psychological phenomenon. Obviously, if the people did not find it efficacious by experience they could not become its customers. No doubt, it is correct that just like the bullet of the rifle and the bomb from the aircraft, magic too cannot have effect without Allah's permission, but it would be mere stubbornness to deny a thing which has been experienced and observed by man for thousands of years.

Question of Reciting Charms and Amulets in Islam

The third thing that arises in connection with these Sūrah is whether recitation of charms and amulets has any place in Islam, and whether such recitation is by itself efficacious or not. This question arises for in many *aḥādīth* it has been reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) at the time of going to bed every night, especially during illness, used to recite the *Mu'awwidhatayn* (or according to other reports, the *Mu'awwidhat*, i.e. *Qul Hurwa-Allahu Aḥad* and the *Mu'awwidhatayn*) thrice, blow in his hands and then rub the hands on his body from head to foot as far as his hands could reach. During his last illness when it was no longer possible for him to do so, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah recited these Sūrah herself or by his command, blew on his hands in view of their being blessed and rubbed them on his body. Traditions on this subject have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Abū Da'ūd and Mu'attā of Imām Mālik through authentic channels on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah herself beside whom no one could be better acquainted with the domestic life of the Holy Prophet.

In this regard, one should first understand its religious aspect. In the *Ḥadīth* a lengthy tradition has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abduillah bin 'Abbas, at the end of which the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "The people of my *Ummah* to enter Paradise without reckoning will be those who neither turn to treatment by branding, nor to enchanting, nor take omens, but have trust in their Lord." (Muslim) According to a tradition reported on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Muḡirah bin Shu'bah the Holy Prophet said, "He who got himself treated by branding, or enchanting, became independent of trust in Allah." (Tirmidhī) Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet disapproved of ten things one of which was recitation of charms and amulets except by means of the *Mu'awwidhatayn* or *Mu'awwidhāt* (Abū Da'ūd, Ahmad, Nasā'ī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim). Some *ahādīth* also show that in the beginning the Holy Prophet had altogether forbidden recitation of charms and amulets, but later he allowed it on the condition that it should not smack of polytheism, but one should recite and blow by means of the holy names of Allah, or the words of the Qur'ān. The words used should be understandable and one should know that there is nothing sinful in it, and one should not wholly rely on the recitation of charms but on Allah's will to make it beneficial." After the explanation of the religious aspect, let us now see what the *Ḥadīth* says in this regard.

Ṭabarānī in *As-Sagħīr* has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī saying: "Once the Holy Prophet was stung by a scorpion during the Prayer. When the Prayer was over, he remarked: God's curse be on the scorpion, it neither spares a praying one, nor any other. Then he called for water and salt, and started rubbing the place where the scorpion had stung with salt water and reciting *Qul yā ayyuhal-kāfirun*, *Qul Huwa Allahu aḥad*, *Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbī-falaq* and *Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbī-nās*, along with it."

Ibn 'Abbās also has related a tradition to the effect "the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to recite this invocation over Ḥaḍrat Hasan and Ḥusain. *U'ūdhu kumā bi-kalimāt Allāhi tammatu min kullī shaitān-in wa ḥammātī-wa min kullī 'ayn-in lammatu*: "I give you in the refuge of Allah's blameless words, from every devil and troublesome thing, and from every evil look." (Bukhārī, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)

A tradition has been related in Muslim, Muwaṭṭa, Ṭabarani and Ḥakim about 'Uthman bin al-'Aṣ'ath Thaḡafi, with a little variation in wording, to the effect that he complained to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), saying: "Since I have become a Muslim I feel a pain in my body, which is killing me." The Holy Prophet said: "Place your right hand on the place where you feel the pain, then recite *Bismillah* thrice and *A'udhu billahi wa qudratihi min sharri ma ajidu wa uhādhiru* ("I seek refuge with Allah and with His power from the evil that I find and that I fear") seven times, and rub your hand." In *Muwaṭṭa* there is the addition: "Uthman bin Abi al-'Ās said: After that my pain disappeared and now I teach the same formula to the people of my house."

Musnad Aḥmad and Ṭahāwī contain this tradition from Talq bin 'Alī. "I was stung by a scorpion in the presence of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). The Holy Prophet recited something and blew over me and rubbed his hand on the affected place."

Muslim contains a tradition from Abu Sa'īd Khudrī, which says: "Once when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) fell ill, Gabriel came and asked: O Muḥammad, are you ill? The Holy Prophet answered in the affirmative. Gabriel said: I blow on you in the name of Allah from everything which troubles you and from the evil of every soul and the evil look of every envier. May Allah restore you to health. I blow on you in His name." A similar tradition has been related in Musnad Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ubadah bin as-Sāmit, which says: "The Holy Prophet was unwell. I went to visit him and found him in great trouble. When I re-visited him in the evening I found him quite well. When I asked how he had become well so soon, he said, Gabriel came and blew over me with some words. Then he recited words similar to those reported in the above Ḥadīth. A tradition similar to this has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah also in Muslim and Musnad Aḥmad."

Imām Aḥmad in his Musnad has related this tradition from Ḥafṣah, mother of the Faithful: "One day the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) visited me in the house and a woman, named Shifā, was sitting

1 Her real name was Laila but she had become well known as Shifā bint 'Abdallāh. She became Muslim before the *hijrah*, she belonged to the clan of Banī 'Adī of

with me. She used to blow on the people to cure them of blisters. The Holy Prophet said to her: Teach Hafṣah also the formula." Imam Aḥmad, Abu Da'ūd and Nasā'i have related this tradition from Shifa bint 'Abdullah herself, saying: "The Holy Prophet said to me: Just as you have taught Hafṣah reading and writing, so teach her blowing to cure blisters as well."

In Muslim there is a tradition from 'Auf bin Malik al Ashja'i to the effect: "We used to practise blowing to cure diseases. We asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for his opinion in this regard. He said: Let me know the words with which you blow over the people. There is no harm in blowing unless it smacks of polytheism."

Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah contain a tradition from Ḥadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, saying: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had forbidden us blowing to cure disease. Then the people of the clan of Ḥadrat 'Āmir bin Ḥazm came and they said: We had a formula with which we used to blow on the people to cure them of scorpion's sting (or snake-bite). But you have forbidden us the practice. Then they recited before him the words which they made use of. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: I do not see any harm in it, so let the one who can do good to his brother, do him good." Another tradition from Jābir bin 'Abdullah in Muslim is: "The family of Ḥazm had a formula to cure snake-bite and the Holy Prophet permitted them to practise it." This is also supported by the tradition from Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah, which is contained in Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, and Ibn Mājah: "The Holy Prophet granted permission to a family of the Ansār for blowing to cure the evil effects of biting by every poisonous creature." Traditions resembling these have been related from Ḥadrat Anas also in Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Muslim and Ibn Mājah, saying that the Holy Prophet gave permission for blowing to cure the bite by poisonous creatures, the disease of blisters and the effects of the evil look."

Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah and Ḥākim have related this tradition on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Umair, freed slave of Abi al Laham: "In the pre-Islamic days I had a formula with which I used to blow over the people. I recited it before the Holy Prophet, whereupon he

the Quraish. This is the same clan to which Ḥadrat 'Umar belonged. Thus she was a relative of Ḥadrat Hafṣah.

told me to drop out such and such words from it, and permitted me to blow with the rest of it."

According to *Mu'watta*, Hadrat Abū Bakr went to the house of his daughter, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, and found that she was unwell and a Jewish woman was blowing over her. Thereupon he said to her "Blow over her by means of the Book of Allah." This shows that if the people of the Book practise blowing by means of the verses of the Torah and the Gospel, it is also permitted.

As for the question whether blowing for curing disease is efficacious also, or not, its answer is that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) not only did not forbid anybody to have recourse to cure and medical treatment but himself stated that Allah has created a cure for every disease and exhorted his followers to use cures. He himself told the people remedies for certain diseases, as can be seen in the *Ḥadīth* in *Kitāb al-Ṭib* (Book of Cures). But the cure can be beneficial and useful only by Allah's command and permission, otherwise if the cure and medical treatment were beneficial in every case, no one would have died in hospitals. Now, if beside the cure and medical treatment, Allah's Word and His beautiful names also are made use of, or Allah is turned to and invoked for help by means of His Word, Names and Attributes in a place where no medical aid is available, it would not be against reason except for the materialists.¹ However, it is not right to disregard intentionally a cure or treatment where it is available, and recourse had only to enchanting and reciting of charms, and the people should start a

-
- 1 Many doctors of the materialistic world also have admitted that the prayer and recourse to Allah are efficacious in recovery from disease. I have had personal experience of this twice in my life. In 1948 when I was interned, a stone passed into my bladder and blocked the urinary channel so that I could not pass urine for 16 hours. I prayed to Allah Almighty for help, for I did not want to request the cruel rulers to arrange medical aid for me. So, the stone left the urinary channel and remained away from it till 1968 when again it started giving me trouble and had to be removed by a surgical operation. Again, in 1953 when I was arrested, I had been suffering from ring-worms on the legs for several months, and no treatment was proving efficacious. After my arrest I again prayed to Allah Almighty as I had prayed in 1948, and my shins were cleansed of the ring worms without any treatment and medicine, and I have never suffered from this disease again.

regular practice of granting amulets as a means of earning their livelihood

Many people in this regard argue from Ḥadrat Abu Sa'īd Khudrī's tradition which has been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Musnad Aḥmad, Abu Da'ūd and Ibn Mājah, and it is supported also by a tradition related in Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās. According to it the Holy Prophet sent some of his Companions including Ḥadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī on an expedition. They halted on the way at the settlement of an Arabian tribe and demanded hospitality from the people, but they refused to extend any hospitality. In the meantime the chief of the tribe was stung by a scorpion and the people came to the travellers to ask if they had any medicine or formula by which their chief could be cured. Ḥadrat Abū Sa'īd said: "Yes, we do have, but since you have refused us hospitality, we would not treat him unless you promised to give us something." They promised to give them a flock of goats (according to some traditions, 30 goats), and Ḥadrat Abū Sa'īd went and started reciting Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah and rubbing his saliva on the affected place.² Consequently, the chief felt relieved of the effect of poison and the people of the tribe gave them the goats as promised. But the Companions said to one another; "Let us not make any use of the goats until we have asked the Holy Prophet about it", for they were not sure whether it was permissible to accept any reward for what they had done. So they came before the Holy Prophet and related what had happened. The Holy Prophet smiled and said, "How did you know that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah could also be used for curing such troubles? Take the goats and allocate my share also in it."

But before one uses this *Ḥadīth* or permission to adopt a regular profession of granting amulets and reciting charms, one should keep in view the conditions under which Ḥadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī had recourse to it, and the Holy Prophet not only held it as permissible but also said that a share for him also should be allocated so that there remained no doubt in the minds of the Companions that such a thing was permissible. The conditions in Arabia in those days were, as they still are, that

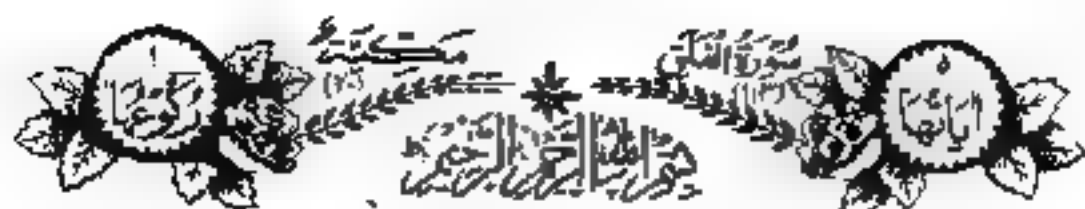
2 There is no mention in the traditions that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah was recited by Ḥadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, they do not even mention that Ḥadrat Abū Sa'īd himself had accompanied the expedition, but Tirmidhī has made mention of both these things

settlements were situated hundreds of miles apart, there were no hotels and restaurants where a traveller could buy food when he reached one of these after several days' journey. Under such conditions it was considered a moral duty that when a traveller reached a settlement the people of the place should extend hospitality to him. Refusal on their part in many cases meant death for the travellers, and this was looked upon as highly blameworthy among the Arabs. That is why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) allowed as permissible the act of his Companions. Since the people of the tribe had refused them hospitality, they too refused to treat their chief, and became ready to treat him only on the condition that they should promise to give them something in return. Then, when one of them with trust in God recited Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah over the chief and he became well, the people gave the promised wages and the Holy Prophet allowed that the wages be accepted as lawful and pure. In Bukhārī the tradition related on the authority of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās about this incident contains the Holy Prophet's words to the effect: "Instead that you should have acted otherwise, it was better that you recited the Book of Allah and accepted the wages for it." He said this in order to impress the truth that Allah's Word is superior to every other kind of enchanting and practice of secret arts. Furthermore, the Message also was incidentally conveyed to the Arabian tribe and its people made aware of the blessings of the Word that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had brought from Allah. This incident cannot be cited as a precedent for the people who run clinics in the cities and towns for the practice of secret arts and have adopted it as a regular profession for earning livelihood. No precedent of it is found in the life and practice of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) or his Companions, their followers and the earliest Imāms.

Relation between Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah and the Mu'awwidhatayn

The last thing which is noteworthy with regard to the *Mu'awwidhatayn* is the relation between the beginning and the end of the Qur'ān. Although the Qur'ān has not been arranged chronologically, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) arranged in the present order the verses and Sūrah revealed during 23 years on different occasions to meet different needs and situations not by himself but by the command of Allah Who revealed them. According to this order, the Qur'ān opens

with the Sūra al-Fātiḥah and ends with the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. Now, let us have a look at the two. In the beginning, after praising and glorifying Allah, Who is Lord of the worlds, Kind, Merciful and Master of the judgement Day, the servant submits: "Lord, You alone I worship and to You alone I turn for help, and the most urgent help that I need from You is to be guided to the Straight Way." In answer, he is given by Allah the whole Qur'ān to show him the straight Way, which is concluded thus: Man prays to Allah, Who is Lord of dawn, Lord of men, King of men, Deity of men, saying: "I seek refuge only with You for protection from every evil and mischief of every creature, and in particular, from the evil whisperings of devils, be they from among men or jinn, for they are the greatest obstacle in following the Straight Way." The relation that the beginning bears with the end, cannot remain hidden from anyone who has understanding and insight.



قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ^١ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ^٢ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا
وَقَبَ^٣ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ^٤ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ^٥



CXIII

AL-FALAQ

الفلق

Verses. 5

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Say: I seek refuge² with the Lord of the dawn,³ from the evil 1-5
of everything He has created,⁴ and from the evil of the darkness of
night when it everspreads,⁵ and from the evil of the blowers (men or
women) into knots,⁶ and from the evil of an envious one when he
envies."⁷

1 *As qul* (say) is a part of the message which was conveyed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) by Revelation for preaching his prophetic message, its first addressee is the Holy Prophet himself but after him every believer too is its addressee

2 The act of seeking refuge necessarily consists of three parts (1) The act of seeking refuge itself, (2) the seeker of refuge, and (3) he whose refuge is sought. Seeking refuge implies feeling fear of something and seeking protection of another, or taking cover of it, or clinging to it, or going under its shelter for safety. The seeker after refuge in any case is the person, who feels that he cannot by himself resist and fight the thing that he fears, but stands in need of refuge with another for protection. Then the one whose refuge is sought must necessarily be a person or being about whom the seeker after refuge believes that he or it alone can

protect him from the calamity. Now, one kind of refuge is that which is obtained according to natural laws in the physical world from a perceptible material object or person or power, for example, taking shelter in a fort for protection against the enemy's attack, or taking cover in a trench or behind a heap of earth, or wall, for protection against a shower of bullets, or taking refuge with a man or government, for protection from a powerful tyrant or taking refuge in the shade of a tree or building for protection from the sun. Contrary to this, the other kind of refuge is that which is sought in a supernatural Being from every kind of danger and every kind of material, moral or spiritual harm and injury on the basis of the belief that that Being is ruler over the physical world and can protect in supersensory ways the one who seeks His refuge. This second kind of refuge is the one that is implied not only in Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah Al-Nās but wherever in the Qur'ān and the *Hadīth* mention has been made of seeking refuge with Allah, it implies this particular kind of refuge and it is a necessary corollary of the doctrine of *Tauhid* that this kind of refuge should be sought from no one but Allah. The polytheists sought this kind of protection, and seek even today, from other beings than Allah, e.g. the jinn, or gods and goddesses. The materialists turn for this also to material means and resources, for they do not believe in any supernatural power. But the believer only turns to Allah and seeks refuge only with Him, against all such calamities and misfortunes to ward off which he feels he has no power. For example, about the polytheists it has been said in the Qur'ān, "And that from among men some people used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinn (Al-Jinn, 16)." And explaining it in E.N. 47 of Sūrah Al-Jinn we have cited Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās's tradition that when the polytheistic Arabs had to pass a night in an uninhabited valley, they would call out, saying: "We seek refuge of the Lord of this valley (i.e. of the jinn who is ruler and master of this valley)." Contrary to this, about Pharaoh it has been said: "When he witnessed the great Signs presented by the Prophet Moses, he showed arrogance on account of his might" (Adh-Dhāriyāt, 39). As for the attitude and conduct of the God-worshippers the Qur'ān says that they seek Allah's refuge for protection against the evil of everything that they fear, whether it is material or moral or spiritual. Thus about Mary it has been said that when God's angel appeared before her suddenly in human guise (when she did not know that he was an angel), she cried out: "I seek the merciful God's refuge from you, if you are a pious man" (Mary, 18). When the Prophet Noah made an improper petition to Allah, and was rebuked by Allah in response, he immediately submitted: "My Lord, I seek Your protection lest I should ask of You anything of which I have no knowledge" (Hūd, 47). When the Prophet Moses commanded the children of Israel to sacrifice a cow and they said that perhaps he was having a jest with them, he replied: "I crave Allah's protection from behaving like ignorant people" (Al-Baqarah, 67).

The same is the case with all the acts of seeking refuge which have been reported in respect of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in the books of *Hadith*. For instance, consider the following prayers that the Holy Prophet made

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to pray, saying, "O God, I seek Your refuge from the evil of the works which I did and from the evil of the works which I did not do." / *e* if I have done a wrong, I seek refuge from its evil results, and if I have not done a work which I should have done, I seek refuge from the loss that I have incurred, or from that I should do what I should not do." (Muslim)

Ibn 'Umar has reported that one of the supplications of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was to the effect, "O God, I seek Your refuge from being deprived of a blessing that You have bestowed on me, and from being deprived of the well-being that You have granted me, and I seek refuge lest Your wrath should descend on me suddenly, and I seek refuge from every kind of Your displeasure." (Muslim)

Zaid bin Arqam has reported that the Messenger Of Allah used to pray, "O God, I seek Your refuge from the knowledge which is not beneficial, from the heart which does not fear You, from the soul which is never satisfied, and from the prayer which is not answered." (Muslim)

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Messenger used to pray: "O God, I seek Your refuge from hunger, for it is a most evil thing with which one may have to pass a night, and I seek Your refuge from dishonesty, for it is sheer evil-mindedness." (Abū Da'ūd)

Ḥaḍrat Anas has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to pray: "O God, I seek Your refuge from leprosy and madness and all evil diseases." (Abū Da'ūd)

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to pray in these words: "O God, I seek Your refuge from the mischief of the fire and from the evil of affluence and poverty." (Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd)

Shakal bin Humaid requested the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to teach him some prayer. He told him to say "O God, I seek Your refuge from the evil of my hearing, from the evil of my sight, from the evil of my tongue from the evil of my heart, and from the evil of my lust," (Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd)

Anas bin Malik has reported that the Holy Prophet used to say: "O God, I seek Your refuge from helplessness, indolence, cowardice, old age and sickness and I seek Your refuge from the torment of the grave and from the mischief of life

and death, (and according to a tradition in Muslim also) from the burden of debt and that the people should overpower me." (Bukhari, Muslim),

Khawla bint Hukaym Sulamiyyah says that she heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as saying that the one who halts at a new stage (during the journey) and says, "I seek refuge in the blameless Words of Allah from the evil of the creatures", will not be caused any harm until he departs from that stage. (Muslim)

We have related these few prayers of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from the *Hadith*, which show that the believer should seek Allah's refuge from every danger and evil and not the refuge of anyone else, nor he should become self-sufficient of Allah and place reliance only on himself

3. The word used in the original is *Rabbul-falaq*. *Falaq* actually means to split and to pierce through. A great majority of the commentators have taken it to mean bringing out the light of dawn by splitting the darkness of night, for in Arabic *falaq as-subh* is often used for the breaking of dawn, and in the Qur'ān also the words :*Fallq-ul-layl* (He Who causes the dawn to appear by splitting the darkness of night) have been used for Allah (Al-An'ām 96). Another meaning of *falaq* also is to create, to bring into being, for everything created in the world appears by splitting something. All vegetation sprouts by splitting open the seed and the soil; all animals come out either from the womb of mother or by breaking open the egg, or some other obstruction. All springs gush out by splitting open the rock or soil. The day appears by piercing through the curtain of the night. The drops of rain pierce through the clouds and fall on the earth. In short, everything in the world comes into being as a result of breaking and splitting another thing; so much so that the earth and the heavens also in the beginning were one mass, then they were broken and parted. (Al-Anbiyā'. 30). Thus, according to this meaning the word *falaq* is common to all creations. Now, if the first meaning is adopted, the verse would mean "I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn", and according to the second meaning, it would mean: "I seek refuge with the Lord of all creation." Here the attribute of "*Rabb*" has been used for Allah instead of His proper Name, for Allah's attribute of being *Rabb*, i.e. Master, Sustainer and Providence, is more relevant to seeking and taking of His refuge. Then, if *Rabbul-falaq* implies Lord of the rising dawn, seeking His refuge would mean "I seek refuge with the Lord Who brings out the bright daylight from the darkness of night so that He may likewise bring well-being for me from all kinds of physical and psychical dangers." If it is taken to mean *Rabb al-khalq* the meaning would be "I seek refuge with the Lord of all creation, so that He may protect me from the evil of His creation."

4 In other words: "I seek His refuge from the evil of all creatures " A few things in this sentence deserve consideration.

First, that the creation of evil has not been attributed to Allah, but the creation of creatures has been attributed to Allah and of evil to the creatures. That is it has not been said: "I seek refuge from the evils that Allah has created" but that "I seek refuge from the evil of the things He has created." This shows that Allah has not created any creature for the sake of evil, but all His work is for the sake of good and a special purpose. However, from the qualities that He has created in the creatures to fulfil the purpose of their creation, sometimes evil appears from some kinds of creatures in most cases.

Second, that even if this one sentence was given and no mention made of seeking Allah's refuge separately from the evils of some particular kinds of creatures in the following sentences, this one sentence alone would have sufficed to express the intent, for in it Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of all creatures. After this general prayer for refuge making mention of seeking refuge from some particular evils by itself gives this meaning. "Though I seek Allah's refuge from the evil of everything created by Allah, I stand in great need of Allah's refuge from the particular evils that have been mentioned in the remaining verses of Sûrah Al-Falaq and Sûrah An-Nâs."

Third, that the most suitable and effective prayer for seeking refuge from the evil of the creatures is that refuge should be sought with their Creator, for He is in any case dominant over His creatures and is aware of their evils, which we know, as well as of those which we do not know. Hence, His refuge is the refuge of the supreme Ruler Whom no power can fight and oppose, and with His refuge we can protect ourselves from every evil of every creature, whether we are aware of it or not. Moreover, this contains the prayer for refuge not only from the evils of the world but also from every evil of the Hereafter.

Fourth, that the word *sharr* (evil) is used for loss, injury, trouble and affliction as well as for the means which cause losses and injuries and afflictions, for example, hunger, disease, injury in accident or war, being burnt by fire, being stung or bitten by a scorpion or snake, being involved in the grief of children's death and similar other evils which are evils in the first sense, for they are by themselves troubles and afflictions. Contrary to this, unbelief, polytheism and every kind of sin and wickedness, for instance, are evils in the second sense, for they cause loss and affliction, although apparently they do not cause any trouble at the moment, rather some sins give pleasure and bring profit. Thus, seeking refuge from evil comprehends both these meanings.

Fifth, that seeking refuge from evil contains two other meanings also. First, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that has already taken place, second, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that has not yet taken place.

5 After seeking Allah's refuge generally from the evil of the creatures, now prayer is being taught for seeking refuge from the evil of some special creatures in particular. The word *ghāsiq* in the verse literally means dark. Thus, at another place in the Qur'an it has been said: "establish the *ṣalāt* from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night (*ila ghataq-il laih*)" (Bani Isrā'il, 78), and *waqab* means to enter or to overspread. Prayer has been taught to seek refuge in particular from the evil of the darkness of night, for most of the crimes and acts of wickedness are committed at night, harmful animals also come out at night, and the night was a very dreadful thing in the days chaos prevailed in Arabia when these verses were revealed. Raiders came out in the dark of night and plundered and destroyed settlements. The people who were thinking of putting the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to death, also made their secret plans at night, so that the murder could not be detected. Therefore, command was given to seek Allah's refuge from the evils and calamities which descend at night. Here, the subtle relation that exists between seeking refuge from the evil of the dark night with the Lord of breaking dawn cannot remain hidden from anybody having insight and understanding.

A difficulty is confronted in the explanation of this verse in view of several authentic traditions. Haḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported: "Once during a moon-lit night, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) took hold of my hand and pointing to the moon said: 'Seek Allah's refuge, for this is *al-ghāsiq idhā waqab*'" (Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Hākim, Ibn Mardūyah). To explain this some scholars said that *idhā waqab* here means *idhā khassaf*, i.e. when the moon is eclipsed. But in no tradition has it been mentioned that when the Holy Prophet pointed to the moon, it was in eclipse. In the Arabic lexicon also *idhā waqab* cannot mean *idhā khassaf*. In our opinion the correct explanation of this *Hadīth* is that since the moon rises in the night (in the daytime it does not shine even if it is there in the sky), what the Holy Prophet meant was this: 'Seek God's refuge from the night, the time when it (the moon) appears, for the light of the moon is not as helpful for the one who resists as for the one who attacks, and not as helpful for the victim of the crime as for the culprit.' On this very basis the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is reported to have said: "When the sun has set, devils scatter on every side. Therefore, gather your children together in the house and keep your animals tied down until the darkness of night disappears."

6 The word '*uqad* in *naffāthāt fil-[']uqad* is plural of '*uqdah*, which means a knot that is tied on a string or piece of thread. *Naffath* means to blow. *Naffāthāt* is plural of *naffāthah*, which may mean the men who blow much, and if taken as a feminine gender, women who blow much; it may as well relate to *nufūs* (human beings) or to *jama'āt*s (groups of men), for both *nafas* and *jama'at* are grammatically feminine. Blowing upon knots, according to most, rather all, commentators implies magic, for the magicians usually tie knots on a string or thread and blow upon them as they do so. Thus, the verse means, "I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn from the evil of magicians, male and female." This meaning is also supported by the traditions which show that when magic was worked on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), Gabriel (peace be on him) had come and taught him to recite the *Mu'awwidhatayn*, and in the *Mu'awwidhatayn* this is the only sentence which relates directly to magic. Abū Muslim Iṣfahānī and Zamakhsharī have given another meaning also of *naffāthāt fil-[']uqad*, which is that it implies the deceitfulness of women and their influencing men's resolutions, views and ideas and this has been compared to a magic spell, for in the love of women, man starts behaving as if he was under a spell. Though this explanation is interesting, it runs counter to the commentary given by the earliest scholars; and it also does not correspond to the conditions in which the *Mu'awwidhatayn* were sent down as we have shown in the Introduction.

About magic one should know that as it since help is sought of the satans and evil spirits or stars to influence the other person evilly, it has been called *kufr* (unbelief) in the Qur'ān. "Solomon was not involved in *kufr* but the satans who taught magic to the people." (Al-Baqarah. 102). But even if it does not contain any word of *kufr*, or any polytheistic element, it is forbidden and unlawful and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has counted it among the seven heinous sins which ruin the Hereafter of man. In Bukhārī and Muslim a tradition has been related from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Avoid seven deadly sins: associating another with Allah, magic, killing a soul, which Allah has forbidden unjustly, devouring interest, eating the orphan's property, fleeing from the enemy in the battlefield, and blandering simple and chaste Muslim women with un-chastity."

7 *Hasad* means that a person should feel unhappy at the better fortune, superiority or good quality that Allah has granted to another, and should wish that it should be taken away from the other person and given to him, or at least the other one should be deprived of it. However, *hasad* does not mean that a person should wish that he too should be blessed with the bounty that the other one has been blessed with. Here, Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of the jealous one when he feels jealous, and takes a practical step with word or deed to satisfy his heart. For until he takes a practical step, his being unhappy may by

itself be bad but it is not an evil for the other person so that he may seek refuge from it. When such an evil appears from a jealous person the best thing would be to seek Allah's refuge from it. Besides this, there are a few other things also which are helpful for obtaining immunity from the evil of the jealous person. First, that one should have trust in Allah and the faith that unless Allah so wills no one can harm him in any way. Second, that one should have patience over what the jealous person says and does and should not start behaving impatiently so as to be degraded morally to the level of the jealous person. Third, that one should in any case maintain dignity and practise piety even if the jealous person behaves frivolously, being fearless of God and shameless of the people. Fourth, that one should free one's mind of every thought about the jealous person and should disregard him altogether, for making him a subject of one's thought is a prelude to being influenced by him. Fifth, that one should do the jealous person a good turn as and when one can, not to speak of treating him evilly, no matter whether this good behaviour mitigates his jealousy or not. Sixth, that one should understand rightly and remain steadfast to the doctrine of *Tauhid*, for the heart which enshrines *Tauhid*, cannot be affected by anyone else's fear except the fear of Allah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ^١ الْمَلِكِ النَّاسِ^٢ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ^٣ مِنْ مَغْرِبِ النَّاسِ^٤
الْعَتَّاسِ^٥ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ^٦ مِنَ الْغَيْثِ وَالنَّاسِ^٧



CXIV

AN-NĀS

النَّاسُ

Verses: 6

Revealed at Makkah.

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Say "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the real God of mankind,¹ from the evil of the whisperer, who returns over and over again,² who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or mankind."³ 1-6

1 Here also, as in Sūrah Al-Falaq, instead of saying *A'udhu-billāhi* (I seek Allah's refuge), a prayer has been taught to seek Allah's refuge by reference to His three attributes: first, that He is *Rabb-un-nās*, i.e. Sustainer, Providence and Master of all mankind; third, that He is *Ilāh-un-nās*, i.e. real Deity of all mankind.

Here, one should clearly understand that the word *ilāh* has been used in two meanings in the Qur'ān: first for the thing or person who is practically being worshipped although it or he is not entitled to worship; second, for Him Who is entitled to worship, Who is in fact the Deity whether the people worship Him or not, wherever this word is used for Allah, it has been used in the second meaning) Seeking refuge by means of these three attributes means: "I seek refuge with that

God Who being the Sustainer, King and Deity of men, has full power over them, can fully protect them and can really save them from the evil, to save myself and others from which I am seeking His refuge. Not only this since He alone is Sustainer, King and Deity, therefore, there is no one beside Him with Whom I may seek refuge and he may give real refuge."

2 The word *waswas* in *waswās-il-khannās* means the one who whispers over and over again, and *waswas* means to whisper into someone's heart an evil suggestion over and over again in such a way or ways that the one who is being inspired may not feel that the whisperer is whispering an evil suggestion into his heart. *Waswasah* by itself suggests repetition just as *zalzalab* contains the meaning of repetitive movement. Since man is not tempted by just one attempt but effort has to be made over and over again to seduce and tempt him, such an attempt is called *waswasah* and the tempter *waswās*. As for the word *khannās*, it is derived from *khunūs*, which means to hide after appearing and to retreat after coming into view. Since *khannās* is the intensive form, it would imply the one who behaves thus very frequently. Now, obviously the whisperer has to approach man for whispering again and again, and besides, when he is also described as *khannās*, the combination of the two words by itself gives the meaning that after whispering once he retreats and then again returns over and over again to repeat the act of whispering. In other words, when once he fails in his attempt to whisper evil, he withdraws, then he again returns to make the second and the third and the next attempt over and over again.

After understanding the meaning of *waswās-il-khannās*, let us consider what is meant by seeking refuge from its evil. Its one meaning is that the seeker after refuge himself seeks God's refuge from its evil, i.e. from the evil lest it should whisper some evil suggestion into his own heart. The second meaning is that the caller to Truth seeks God's refuge from the evil of the one who whispers evil suggestions into the hearts of the people against himself. It is not in his own power to approach all the people in whose hearts evil suggestions are being whispered against himself individually and remove the misunderstandings of every person. It is also not right and proper for him that he should give up his mission of inviting others to Allah and should devote all his time and energy to removing the misunderstanding created by the whisperer and to answering their accusations. It is also below his dignity that he should stoop to the level of his opponents. Therefore, Allah has instructed the caller to Truth to seek only His refuge from the evil of the wicked people, and then to attend single-mindedly to his work of invitation and mission. For it is not for him to deal with them but for Allah, who is Sustainer of men, King of men, God of men.

Here, one should also understand that an evil suggestion is the starting point of evil act. When it affects a careless or heedless person, it creates in him a desire for evil. Then, further whisperings change the evil desire into an evil intention and evil purpose. When the evil suggestion grows in intensity, the intention becomes a resolution, which then culminates in the evil act. Therefore, the meaning of seeking God's refuge from the evil of the whisperer is that Allah should nip the evil in the bud.

If seen from another aspect, the order of the evil of the whisperers seems to be this: first, they incite one to open unbelief, polytheism, or rebellion against Allah and His Messenger, and enmity of the righteous (godly) people. If they fail in this and a person does enter Allah's religion, they misguide him to some innovation. If they fail in this too, they tempt him to sin. If they do not succeed even in this, they inspire the man with the suggestion that there is no harm in indulging in minor sins, so that if he starts committing these freely, he is overburdened with sin. If one escapes from this too, in the last resort they try that one should keep the true religion confined to oneself, and should do nothing to make it prevail, but if a person defeats all these plans, the whole party of the devils from among men and jinn makes a common front against him, incites and stirs up the people and makes them shower him with invective and accusation and slander, and defames him as widely as it can. Then, Satan comes to the believer and excites him to anger, saying: "It is cowardly of you to have borne all this insult: arise and clash with your opponents." This is the last and final device with Satan by which he tries to thwart the struggle of the caller to Truth and entangle him in difficulties and obstructions. If he succeeds in escaping from this too, Satan becomes powerless before him. About this same thing it has been said in the Qur'an: "If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge with Allah." (Al-A'raf: 200, Hā Mīm As-Sajdah: 36); "Say: Lord, I seek refuge with You from the promptings of satans." (Al-Mu'minūn: 97); "The fact is that if ever an evil suggestion from Satan so much as touches those, who are God-fearing people, they immediately get alerted and clearly see the right course they should adopt." (Al-A'raf: 201). And on this very basis about the people who escape from this last attack of Satan Allah says: "None can attain to this rank except those who are men of great good fortune." (Hā Mīm As-Sajdah: 35).

In this connection, another thing also should be kept in mind, and it is this: Evil suggestion is not whispered into the heart of man only from outside by the satans from among men and jinn, but also by the self of man from within. His own wrong theories misguide his intellect, his own unlawful motives and desires lead his power of discrimination, will and power of judgement astray, and it is not only the satans from outside but within man his satan of the self also beguiles him. This same thing has been expressed in the Qur'an, thus: "and We know the evil

suggestions arising from his self." (Qāf : 16). On this very basis, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in his well-known Sermon said: "We seek Allah's refuge from the evils of our self."

3. According to some scholars, these words mean that the whisperer whispers evil into the hearts of two kinds of people: the jinn and the men. If this meaning is admitted, the word *nās* would apply to both jinn and men. They say that this can be so, for when the word *rijāl* (men) in the Qur'an has been used for the jinn, as in *Al-Jinn*: 6, and when *nafar* can be used for the group of jinn, as in *Al-Ahqāf*: 29, men and jinn both can be included metaphorically in the word *nās* also. But this view is wrong because the words *nās*, *ins* and *insān* are even lexically contrary in meaning to the word *jinn*. The actual meaning of *jinn* is hidden creation and jinn is called jinn because he is hidden from man's eye. On the contrary, the words *nās* and *ins* are spoken for *insān* (man) only on the basis that he is manifest and visible and perceptible. In *Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ*: 29, the word *ānasa* has been used in the meaning of *rā'a*, i.e. "the Prophet Moses saw a fire in the direction of *Tūr*." In *Sūrah An-Nisā*: 6, the word *ānastum* has been used in the meaning of *ahsastum* or *ra'aytum* (i.e. if you perceive or see that the orphans have become capable). Therefore, *nās* cannot apply to *jinn* lexically, and the correct meaning of the verse is: "from the evil of the whisperer who whispers evil into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or from the men themselves." In other words, whispering of evil is done by devils from among jinn as well as by devils from among men and the prayer in this *Sūrah* has been taught to seek refuge from the evil of both. This meaning is supported by the Qur'an as well as by the *Hadīth*. The Qur'an says: "And so it has always been that We set against every Prophet enemies from among devils of men and devils of jinn, who have been inspiring one another with charming things to delude the minds." (*Al-A'ām* :112)

And in the *Hadīth*, Imām Ahmad, Nasā'i, and Ibn Hibbān have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr a tradition, saying: "I sat before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), who was in the Mosque. He said: Abū Dharr, have you performed the Prayer? I replied in the negative. He said: Arise and perform the Prayer. So, I performed the Prayer. The Holy Prophet said: O Abū Dharr, seek Allah's refuge from the devils of men and the devils of jinn. I asked, are there devils among men also? O Messenger of Allah! He replied: Yes."

CONCLUSION

I thank Allah, the Exalted, most sincerely that the difficult and exacting task of writing the *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*, which I began in Muharram, A.H. 1361 (February, 1942), has come to completion today after 30 years and four months. This is entirely Allah's favour and beneficence that he blessed a humble servant of His with the grace to render this service to the cause of His Holy Book. Whatever is right and correct in it is because of Allah's guidance, and wherever I have made a mistake in the interpretation and explanation of the Qur'ān, it is due to my own incorrect and unsound knowledge and understanding. But I thank God that I have not committed a mistake deliberately. Therefore, I hope from Allah's beneficence that He will forgive it; and if His servants have found this work of mine helpful in any way in attaining to guidance, He will make it a means of my forgiveness in the Hereafter. I also request the learned to point out my errors and mistakes. Whatever is proved wrong to me by argument, I will rectify it, if Allah so wills. I seek God's refuge that I should commit a mistake with regard to Allah's Book, or persist in a mistake, deliberately.

As is obvious from the name of this Book, my effort has been to help the common educated people to understand the Qur'ān as I have understood it myself, to explain its real meaning and intention so that the people may reach its spirit, to dispel the doubts and suspicions, and to answer the questions which arise in the hearts on reading the Qur'ān or only its translations, and to explain in detail the things which have been stated and mentioned only briefly in the Qur'ān. In the beginning, it was not my purpose to go into the details; therefore, the notes in the first volume (Sūrah al-Fāṭihah to al-An'ām) remained very brief. Later, as the work progressed, I began to feel the need of writing more detailed notes. Consequently, the readers of the subsequent volumes now feel that the first volume has remained somewhat deficient. But an advantage

of the repetition of themes in the Qur'ān also is that since the theme whose explanation has remained deficient at one place has recurred also in the subsequent Sūrahs, its further explanation becomes possible in the notes to the subsequent Sūrahs. I hope that the people who do not remain content with reading the Qur'ān with the help of the *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* just once, would themselves feel when they read the whole book for the second time that the explanations of the later Sūrahs prove very helpful in understanding the opening Sūrahs.

LAHORE

ABUL A'ĪĀ

24 Rabī' ath-Thānī, 1392 A.H.

(7 June, 1972 A.D.)